

MOVING AMERICA
TOWARD
JUSTICE

50  LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR
CIVIL RIGHTS
UNDER LAW



TOWARD JUSTICE...

“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” President Barack Obama has referenced these words in speeches. The popular belief is that, in doing so, he quotes Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. While Dr. King did famously speak these words on numerous occasions to convey the righteousness of nonviolent disobedience, he was actually paraphrasing Unitarian minister Theodore Parker (1810-1860), an earlier champion of abolition and social progress who believed that America could only function as a true democracy when all people were free. “I do not pretend to understand the moral universe,” Parker originally stated. “The arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice.”



MISSION

MISSION STATEMENT

The principal mission of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is to secure equal justice for all through the rule of law, targeting in particular the inequities confronting African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities. The Lawyers' Committee is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to enlist the private bar's leadership and resources in combating racial discrimination and the resulting inequality of opportunity—work that continues to be vital today.

MISSION IMPLEMENTATION

Confronting our nation today are debilitating and subtle forms of racial discrimination, the emergence of new, racially-targeted predatory practices, and the continuing impact of historical racial discrimination based on de jure segregation and de facto inequities. The Lawyers' Committee seeks to address this evolving landscape and achieve equal opportunity for disadvantaged and excluded minorities by marshaling the leadership, skills and pro bono resources of the private bar. While the Lawyers' Committee's primary focus is to represent the interests of African-Americans, the Lawyers' Committee also represents the interests of other victims of discrimination where doing so can help to achieve its mission and advance our nation's commitment to justice and equality for all.

The Lawyers' Committee implements its mission and objectives through collaborative, multi-dimensional approaches to litigation, public policy advocacy, education of the public, transactional representation, and other forms of service in the cause of civil rights.

SUMMARY

The Lawyers' Committee implements its mission through the following core project areas:

- » Community Development
- » Educational Opportunities
- » Employment Discrimination
- » Fair Housing and Fair Lending
- » Legal Mobilization
- » Public Policy
- » Voting Rights

Through these projects and beyond them, the Lawyers' Committee is also engaged in critical matters such as economic and environmental justice, international and domestic human rights, immigrant rights, judicial diversity and criminal justice. The Lawyers' Committee's Board of Directors also leads initiatives to take positions on Supreme Court Nominations, among others.



MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BARBARA R. ARNWINE

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is a dynamic legal civil rights organization that began as a result of President John F. Kennedy's 1963 call to the private bar to engage in the struggle for racial and social justice in America. On June 15, 1963, as demands for racial justice were increasingly being met with lawless intimidation and violence, President Kennedy made his historic televised address to the nation on civil rights in which he said "it is better to settle these matters in the courts than on the streets," adding "those who do nothing are inviting shame as well as violence." Just a few days later, on June 21, 1963, he met with 244 prominent lawyers at the White House to urge them to defend the rule of law and the rights of civil rights demonstrators. Within a week the Lawyers' Committee was formed to obtain equal opportunity for minorities by leveraging the pro bono resources of the private bar to address legal factors that contribute to racial justice and economic opportunity.



Nearly 50 years later we have witnessed, and helped to advance, historical civil rights victories, including the passage of landmark legislation such as the enactments and reauthorizations of the Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act, and Fair Housing Act.

Yet our nation still faces tremendous challenges as we struggle to overcome the legacy of past injustice and persistent ongoing discrimination and bigotry. Success in addressing these challenges depends on progress in overcoming the racial tensions, exclusions, and inequalities that predominate in our political, economic, and social spheres. Vastly changing and diversifying national demographics present a unique opportunity for the United States to be a world economic and moral leader. This potential cannot be actualized, however, unless there exist true opportunities for development, inclusion, and engagement of all racial populations and excluded groups on an equal footing.

On one hand we see a society with improved racial attitudes, integrated workplaces, and some sectors with commitments to diversity, and the 2008 election of an African American to the highest office in the country. On the other hand, we are also a nation of high unemployment, especially for Blacks and Latinos, who face extensive barriers to equal employment. We are also seeing a rise in voter suppression laws, anti-immigrant laws, disproportional home foreclosures, racially targeted predatory practices, entrenched racism and stereotyping, racialized criminal justice policies, and a torn and abandoned social compact for the protection and advancement of the most vulnerable in our nation.

When the Lawyers' Committee was founded in 1963, few envisioned the true intractability and resilience of racism or the current American racial landscape nearly 50 years later with all of its changes, complexities, nuances, contradictions, challenges, and promise. Simply stated, continuing racial inequality threatens to stifle the legitimate aspirations, potential, and promise of our nation's African American population. The Lawyers' Committee, with its thousands of pro bono partners, is working to become an even greater force in fighting for racial justice by pursuing a proactive agenda of structural change while balancing the need to defend and preserve hard-won civil rights gains.

THE ROLE OF THE LAWYERS' COMMITTEE AND LEGAL PRO BONO RESOURCES

The Lawyers' Committee is a critical catalyst within the civil rights legal community. Our staff attorneys, who are experts in their fields, collaborate with major law firms as co-counsel. Each year, hundreds of lawyers donate millions of dollars' worth of pro bono legal services by handling cases, working on projects, analyzing statutes, preparing materials and providing technical assistance. As you will see in the following pages, we work in several Project areas, including: Community Development; Educational Opportunities; Employment Discrimination; Fair Housing and Fair Lending; Legal Mobilization; Public Policy; and Voting Rights. This brochure provides a glimpse into our current work and our proud legacy. Also outlined is our model for pro bono work and the important role of our large and robust Board of Directors and Trustees.

As we approach our 50th Anniversary in 2013, we pause to reflect on our accomplishments in answering President Kennedy's call, but also to focus on the civil rights challenges that lie ahead for the nation. The United States must aspire to move "toward justice" as an economic and moral leader. The Lawyers' Committee will continue to be a vital part of this movement, ensuring that true opportunities for the development, inclusion and engagement of all racial populations and excluded groups prevail.



Barbara R. Arnwine

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The Lawyers' Committee's Board of Directors and Trustees plays a leadership role in the organization and is engaged in all matters and activities. The Board's size, more than 200 people, reflects the number of lawyers invited to the initial White House meeting in 1963 with President Kennedy and the expectation that these legal community leaders will directly engage in the work of the Committee.

The Board is comprised of partners and attorneys at prominent law firms, corporate counsel, law school deans and private practitioners across the country. The Directors and Trustees perform in an advisory role, with many serving on one or more of the Committee's programmatic and administrative subcommittees. The Board is made up of two Co-Chairs, who serve two-year terms, and a 15-member Executive Committee, which is the governing body of the organization and meets three

to four times a year. Regional Vice-Chairs represent the West, Midwest, Northeast, Mid-Atlantic and New York, the Chesapeake Area (Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, and West Virginia), and the Southeast. The Executive Director and staff are generally responsible for day-to-day decision-making.

The Board is one of the most important resources of the Lawyers' Committee; as it is primarily the law firms and corporations represented on it that provide the pro bono resources and expertise that are so critical to success of the organization. In addition to the litigation, transactional, and other work done in connection with the Committee's Projects, the Board leads other key aspects of the Committee's work, with staff assistance, such as advising on position statements for Supreme Court nominations.

REFLECTIONS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

“The Lawyers' Committee affords its members a special opportunity to perform outstanding public service while continuing to engage in private practice. There is no greater reward for a practicing lawyer than to know that he or she has – through their professional skill and experience – promoted racial justice.”

Daniel F. Kolb, Davis, Polk & Wardell, LLP

“For an attorney, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is the gold standard for being active in civil rights issues.”

Nicholas T. Christakos, Sutherland, Asbill & Brennan, LLP

“The organization has accomplished so much and has been instrumental in furthering and advancing the cause of civil rights over the last several decades.”

Johnita P. Due, Turner Broadcasting



THE TIMELINE OF JUSTICE

1954-1963

- » Numerous struggles in the civil rights movement, such as the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Montgomery, AL bus boycotts, and riots against school integration in Little Rock, AR and U. of MS led to a call for the creation of the LC.

1963

- » President Kennedy summons 244 prominent lawyers to the White House, urging active support of the rule of law and racial equality, leading to the launch of LC.
- » 200,000 people gather for Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington to fight for jobs and justice.

1964

- » LC opens first office in Mississippi.
- » LC begins representing The National Council of Churches to encourage the MS Bar and its lawyers to shoulder their responsibilities to represent Blacks. When those efforts fail, volunteers go to work representing clients throughout Mississippi, mostly in criminal cases.
- » President Lyndon B. Johnson signs Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibiting discrimination of all kinds based on race, color, religion, or national origin.

1965

- » Hundreds of demonstrators are arrested in Jackson, MS for protesting restrictive voting bills. LC and others collaborate in a federal court suit challenging the constitutionality of parade ordinances.
- » The Voting Rights Act (VRA) passes with requirements intended to make efforts to suppress the minority vote, such as literacy tests and poll taxes, illegal.

1967

- » LC begins providing assistance for human rights problems in South Africa, continuing for 30 years through the end of apartheid in South Africa.

1968

- » With support of LC and others the Civil Rights Act of 1968 prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing.
- » LC begins its Urban Areas Project, which organized and staffed local Lawyers' Committees around the country.

1969

- » Supreme Court rules in *Alexander v. Holmes Co. Board of Education* that continued operation of segregated schools in MS is no longer permissible. LC Co-Chair Louis Oberdorfer argues the case.

1973

- » LC represents NAACP in trial in matter of *Claiborne Hardware Co. v. NAACP*. Businesses in Clairborne, MS sued the NAACP and individuals in state court to obtain a judgment that would have made NAACP insolvent.

1978

- » President Jimmy Carter hosts White House reception on LC's 15th Anniversary.

1982

- » The LC plays a central role in advocating for the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act in 1982, with Frank Parker providing critical testimony.

1984

- » LC successfully challenges Mississippi congressional districts in *Brooks v. Winter* which allowed Mike Espy to become the first Black congressman from MS in 100 years. The LC also successfully challenges county and municipal redistricting in several states.

1987

- » LC and other civil rights groups strongly oppose the Supreme Court nomination of Robert Bork due to his opposition to the federal government's authority to impose standards of voting fairness on states and his statements on rolling back civil rights. The Senate rejected his nomination.

1988

- » Overriding President Reagan's veto, Congress passes the Civil Rights Restoration Act, expanding non-discrimination laws in private institutions receiving federal funds.
- » LC's Southern Africa Project is a key player in the successful evolution to majority rule in Namibia.

1991

- » President George Bush reverses position and signs Civil Rights Act of 1991, which strengthens existing laws and provides damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination.
- » In *Clark v. Roemer*, argued by Rob McDuff of the LC, the Supreme Court holds that a change to a judicial election system must be precleared under Section 5 of the VRA.

1993

- » After vigorous efforts by LC, including working to shape the legislation, provide testimony, and build Congressional support, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) is enacted into law.
- » LC celebrates 30th Anniversary with White House reception hosted by President Bill Clinton.

1994

- » President Clinton signs Executive Order 12898, which requires federal agencies to address environmental justice issues in their policies and programs.
- » Founded in 1991, LC's South Africa Voting Rights, Education, and Monitoring Project sends multiple delegations to observe elections in South Africa.



The Lawyers' Committee's (LC) legacy is intertwined with significant victories and accomplishments of the civil rights movement, from landmark Supreme Court cases to the enactment and reauthorization of historic legislation such as the Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act, and Fair Housing Act.

1997

- » LC's Brenda Wright argued in the case of *Young v. Fordice* before the Supreme Court and won unanimously. The Court held that MS violated Section 5 of the VRA by implementing changes to its registration system without obtaining preclearance.

2001

- » LC co-founds Election Protection Coalition.

2004

- » LC leads major Election Protection Campaign.
- » After a decade-long legal battle, LC secures a victory for clients in *Wynwood CDC v. City of Miami* providing for economic advancements in the minority community.
- » LC obtains a favorable settlement in *Pitt v. City of Portsmouth*, which alleged racially charged housing discrimination. Settlement provided the community damages and a new fair housing center.

2005

- » LC takes immediate action in the Gulf after Hurricane Katrina, focusing on displaced homeowners and renters' assistance from FEMA. LC brings first challenge to FEMA's failed response in landmark *McWaters v. FEMA* case, forcing FEMA to stop eviction of almost 100,000 Katrina survivors and improve housing assistance.

2006

- » LC and its National Commission on the Voting Rights Act are instrumental in advocating for the successful reauthorization of the VRA. The LC contributed more materials to the Congressional Record than any other organization.

2008

- » LC leads Election Protection, which engages more than 10,000 volunteers; Hotline receives more than 240,000 calls; website receives more than 300,000 visits.
- » LC and partners file federal lawsuit against HUD challenging MS plan to divert nearly \$600 million of affordable housing hurricane recovery funds to finance the expansion of the Port of Gulfport. Two years later, they obtained a favorable settlement that created a new housing recovery program.

2009

- » LC successfully defends Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act before the Supreme Court in the matter of *Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District No. 1 v. Holder*.
- » In *Coalition for Equity and Excellence in Maryland Higher Education v. Maryland Higher Education Commission*, LC represents students and alumni from historically Black colleges and universities.
- » LC reaches settlement with State of OH in *League of Women Voters of OH v. Brunner* that allows for LC and partners to ensure adequate and consistent election administration until 2015.
- » LC supports passage of Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which amends the Civil Rights Act by revising the statute of limitations for filing equal-pay lawsuits.
- » After 12 years of support, LC lauds passage of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which provides protection to the LGBTQ community and broadens enforcement powers in federal agencies.

2010

- » LC launches the Parental Readiness and Empowerment Program (PREP) to help parents be effective advocates by providing information on rights related to their child's education.
- » President Ronald Reagan launched the War on Drugs in 1982, which led to a spike in Black incarceration due to crack-cocaine sentencing disparities. In 2010, the LC was instrumental in securing the passage of the Fair Sentencing Act, reducing the disparity ratio from 100:1 to 18:1.
- » LC launches *PreventLoanScams.org* to stop illegal scammers by creating a national clearinghouse and database for complaints.
- » LC files suit in NY federal court contending that thousands of minorities were rejected for jobs by the Census Bureau because of discrimination.
- » LC releases report "Now is the Time: Environmental Injustice in the U.S. and Recommendations for Eliminating Disparities."
- » LC and partners file a federal civil rights lawsuit against the LA Department of Education on behalf of New Orleans students with special needs.

2011–2012

- » LC spearheads national anti-voter suppression campaign including the interactive Map of Shame.
- » Efforts by a voting rights coalition, including LC, to ensure proper implementation of the NVRA have resulted in about 1 million citizens being able to register to vote in several states.
- » LC and partners file several lawsuits in CA and NY on behalf of homeowners victimized by networks of scam artists.
- » U.S. Court of Appeals upholds constitutionality of key VRA provision against challenge by Shelby Co., AL, a largely-White suburb of Birmingham. LC defends Section 5 of the VRA in the case.

2013

- » LC will celebrate its 50th anniversary.





The Community Development Project (CDP) is the first national transactional pro bono project that provides direct legal services to nonprofit organizations in the most underserved regions of the country. The CDP promotes housing and economic opportunities in low-income communities through volunteer legal services. The unique national pro bono network of the Lawyers' Committee supplements dedicated resources with high-caliber legal talent to represent client organizations, develop legal materials and training, and advance

opportunities in neighborhoods suffering from economic isolation and neglect. This legal assistance helps local community development corporations fulfill their mandate to revitalize impoverished minority neighborhoods and advance economic opportunity. The CDP has provided direct pro bono legal support to community-based organizations in Arkansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Virginia, and others through ongoing relationships with local groups dedicated to neighborhood reinvestment.



Playground shrouded in smog near the Gavin nuclear power plant in Cheshire, Ohio. In May 2003, residents of Cheshire were forced to move from their homes due to environmental pollution. © 2003 Joy Phillips, Courtesy of <http://photoshare.org/>

SPOTLIGHT

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The Lawyers' Committee has worked on Environmental Justice issues for more than 20 years. Low-income communities and people of color are disproportionately burdened by environmental pollution and the myriad of health problems associated with poor air and water quality and toxic exposure. In June 2010, the Project released "Now is the Time: Environmental Injustice in the U.S. and Recommendations for Eliminating Disparities," which outlines recommendations on how the Administration can effectively utilize existing law to eliminate disparities in environmental protection and how the agencies can fulfill their responsibilities under Executive Order 12898, which established the federal policy on environmental justice.

"Having the Lawyers' Committee in our corner is the great leveler. It connects us to the best minds in Washington and the best legal support that our clients could hope for."

Reilly Morse, Mississippi Center for Justice

» EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Educational Opportunities Project (EOP) seeks to establish education as a civil right. The Educational Opportunities Project has adopted a multi-faceted strategy to challenge the invidious discriminatory practices that deny equitable access to quality education. Working with private law firms and community leaders, the EOP has been particularly successful in using impact litigation to promote integrated learning environments, challenge discriminatory and excessive discipline practices, and demand equitable access to educational resources.

In addition, the EOP engages in public policy advocacy on issues related to educational quality and equity. The EOP is also committed to improving the academic and life outcomes for minority and disadvantaged youth by narrowing the achievement and opportunity gap. The Parental Readiness and Empowerment Program (PREP) was launched in 2010 in San Diego with generous support from Qualcomm, Inc. and promotes the importance of parental involvement in improving educational outcomes for minority and low-income youth. In 2012, a new PREP project launched in Arlington, Virginia and plans are in process for a PREP New York City site.

SPOTLIGHT

LAWSUIT AGAINST LOUISIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Lawyers' Committee and partners represent plaintiffs in *P.B. v. Pastorek*, a case challenging the systemic failure of the special education system in New Orleans. Plaintiffs include ten students with disabilities who have been denied equal access to educational opportunities, who have been routinely pushed out of school, and who have been subject to discrimination on the basis of their disabilities. The lawsuit challenges the failure of the Louisiana Department of Education to ensure that all public schools in New Orleans comply with federal and state civil rights and anti-discrimination laws. This case has the potential to raise public awareness of the extent to which the reliance on charters to cure a failing school system has fallen short of expectations and left behind some of our most vulnerable students.



Victory in P.B. v. Pastorek: EOP attorneys, community partners, and clients after U.S. District Judge Jay Zainey denied Defendants' Motion to Dismiss.

“I am very pleased to have attended this workshop. The information I received was very worthwhile for me...There are so many parents that need this workshop. I believe that I am very prepared to be a parent advocate for my children and to support them in school. Thank you very much.”

Minerva Espejo, Attendant of PREP San Diego Clinic in May 2011

» EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

The Employment Discrimination Project challenges all forms of racial, national origin and sexual discrimination in the workplace, both private and governmental, including discrimination by federal, state, and local agencies. The Project is acclaimed for litigating complex and often protracted class action lawsuits on behalf of minorities. With the crucial assistance of law firms that co-counsel cases with the Lawyers' Committee, the Project dismantles systemic barriers faced by minorities in the workplace. The Project works with government officials and Congress to ensure strong government enforcement of fair employment laws.

The Lawyers' Committee was instrumental in the issuance of updated guidance by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in April 2012 that will greatly reduce the misuse of criminal history background checks to deny employment to persons of color. The new guidance strengthens enforcement efforts against

employers who are misusing criminal history background checks and provides clear guidance to employers on the appropriate use of such background checks.

Among its other cases and matters, the Project is involved in ongoing work regarding the misuse of arrest histories by the U.S. Census Bureau for hiring purposes in the 2010 decennial census (*Eugene Johnson, et al., v. Gary Locke, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce*). The Project is also working on issues facing immigrants; one example of which is its representation of a group of Hmong American and Hispanic workers in their claims of discrimination on the basis of race and national origin, harassment, and retaliation arising from their employment with Supply Technologies in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Project hopes that its efforts will prevent the use of discriminatory hiring practices around the country in the future.



SPOTLIGHT

ACCESS CAMPAIGN

A key current initiative is the Access Campaign, which examines employers' misuse of criminal histories and credit checks in screening workers. Through a multi-disciplinary approach, the Lawyers' Committee litigates high-impact cases, educates workers and employers about the laws governing background checks, and advocates before enforcement agencies and policymakers. The Campaign also provides informational brochures to job seekers and employers about their rights and responsibilities in regards to background checks. One example of the Project's advocacy on this issue is the passage of Maryland's law restricting the use of credit checks in hiring.

Job Fair for the Unemployed. Photos courtesy of The Congressional Black Caucus "For the People" Jobs Initiative.

»FAIR HOUSING AND FAIR LENDING

Housing discrimination is a painful, stubborn reality for people of color in the United States. All too often, substandard segregated housing in minority communities exacerbates economic, political, and educational disparities. In an effort to overcome these problems, the Fair Housing Project litigates claims under the Fair Housing Act to challenge discrimination in rental and private markets as well as in public and assisted housing. The Project's work has resulted in millions of dollars in relief for our fair housing clients. One of the Project's highest fair housing priorities is to create and support programs and activities that promote Affirmatively Furthering

Fair Housing (AFFH), a requirement of the Fair Housing Act. The Lawyers' Committee has an ongoing commitment to identifying best practices for meeting AFFH responsibilities and for better involving local communities in AFFH planning.

A key initiative of the Project is the Loan Modification Scam Prevention Network, a large-scale national campaign designed to enhance and support existing state and local efforts to stop loan scammers, increase scam reporting, educate homeowners, file litigation, and work with law enforcement.

SPOTLIGHT

HUD SETTLEMENT

On November 15, 2010, the Fair Housing Project's five-year-old Hurricane Katrina initiative assisting low-income victims of Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi culminated in the announcement of a major agreement with Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the State of Mississippi to create a new housing recovery program proposed by the State and approved by HUD. The agreement reallocated over \$132 million in disaster recovery funds to a new housing program designed to address the ongoing unmet housing needs of low income households and renters still unserved five years after the storm. This agreement grew out of *Mississippi State Conference NAACP v. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*, a lawsuit filed in 2008 challenging HUD's approval of a Mississippi proposal to divert \$570 million from housing programs to a major expansion of the Port of Gulfport. The lawsuit became the central vehicle in the ongoing effort to provide new funding to low income households and renters at a time when low income and minority victims of the storm were not receiving a fair share of housing recovery funding.



“Our Partners for a Safe and Healthy Port Campaign received Governor Haley Barbour’s attention as a result of legal counsel that the Lawyers’ Committee and its pro bono partners provided to our campaign. We are fortunate to have the Lawyers’ Committee as an ally and counsel.”

Roberta Avila, Steps Coalition

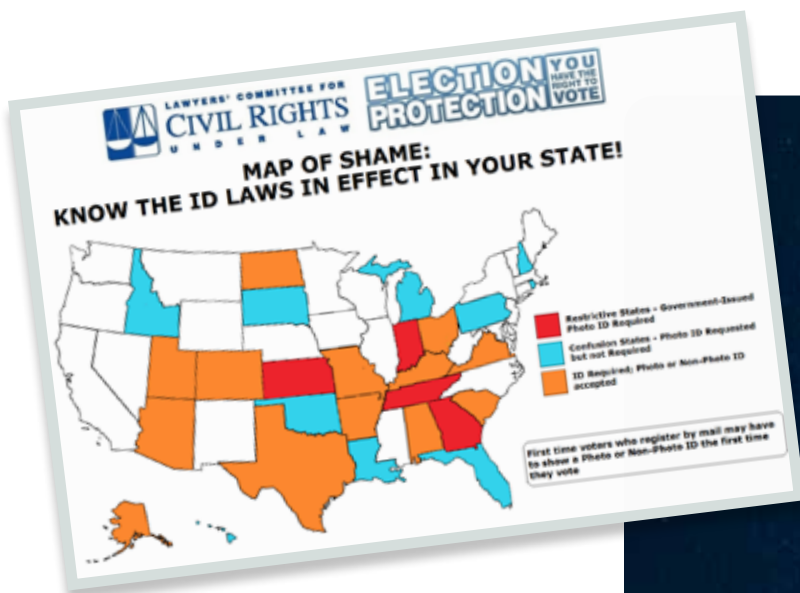
For more than four decades, the Lawyers' Committee has been at the forefront of the legal struggle to achieve equality and protect advances in voting rights for racial and ethnic minorities and other traditionally disenfranchised groups. Today, that tradition continues. With the indispensable assistance of private law firms, the Voting Rights Project (VRP) has an integrated program of litigation, voter protection, research, advocacy, and education.

The work of the VRP has empowered millions of low income people to vote as a result of its litigation activities. One example of this can be seen through the work the Project does to ensure adherence to the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA). When properly implemented, the NVRA makes voter registration more accessible to eligible voters in federal elections and standardizes the process of removing voters from the registration list. The VRP has brought a series of lawsuits that have successfully remedied state failure to comply with

portions of the NVRA. The Project will continue to investigate and file new cases to improve the accessibility of voter registration for a large number of low income and minority citizens.

The VRP continues to lead Election Protection (EP), the nation's largest non-partisan voter protection coalition, which protects the vote year round by working with national and local partners to assist voters and ensure that their rights are not abridged. In the summer of 2012, the Lawyers' Committee released a free Smartphone application, which empowers voters with accurate and easy to obtain key information about registration, polling place location, local voting systems, and where to go for assistance if they run into voting problems.

Among other things, the VRP is also highly involved in efforts to protect minority voting rights during decennial redistricting and to stop the spread of disenfranchising legislation.



State photo voter ID laws and other suppressive legislation have swept the nation, threatening to roll back the hard-won right of every American citizen to participate freely in our Nation's democratic processes. These recently enacted laws disenfranchise many voters, including minorities, low-income persons, senior citizens, voters with disabilities, and students. The "Map of Shame" shows suppressive legislation around the country through September 2011. The "Map of Shame" pictured here is updated as of October 2012. A current interactive map is available at mapofshame.org.

SPOTLIGHT

CONTINUED DEFENSE OF THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) requires federal review before certain states and counties with a record of voting discrimination may enforce new voting practices and procedures, and it is considered one of the most effective pieces of civil rights legislation in history. Through the Lawyers' Committee's National Commission on the Voting Rights Act, the Voting Rights Project played an indispensable role in the effort to reauthorize Section 5 of the VRA in 2006. The Lawyers' Committee has continued to play a leading role in supporting and defending this landmark law from efforts to have Section 5 declared unconstitutional over the past five years, including garnering a favorable decision in a legal challenge by Shelby County, Alabama in September 2011.

The Legal Mobilization Project works to address civil rights issues beyond a litigation-only model, including the involvement of large scale pro bono law firms, technology, advocacy, education, as well as a variety of enforcement options, while working with other Lawyers' Committee expert lawyers on particular issues. This includes developing overall organizational plans,

protocols, volunteer and client materials, management tools, and volunteer recruitment and training. Programs developed in coordination with the core substantive projects include Election Protection, the Immigrant Rights Initiative, Parental Readiness and Empowerment, and the Loan Modification Scam Prevention Network.

SPOTLIGHT

LOAN MODIFICATION SCAM PREVENTION NETWORK

The Loan Modification Scam Prevention Network (LMSPN) is a national coalition of government agencies, nonprofits and service providers using education and a centralized complaint gathering process to help stop loan modification scams. This effort is led by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, the Homeownership Preservation Foundation (1-888-995-HOPE), NeighborWorks America (LoanScamAlert.org), and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (PreventLoanScams.org). Since the launch of the LMSPN database in February 2010 through September 2012, more than 25,000 homeowners nationwide have reported scams or potential scams totaling more than \$70 million in lost money.



Prevent Loan Scams Complaint Sheet

“The Lawyers’ Committee is unique in its ability to leverage the private bar on behalf of civil rights. The matters on which lawyers at this firm have worked with the Lawyers’ Committee are important, fulfilling for the lawyers who work on them, and critical in helping the firm perform valuable public interest work.”

Marc L. Fleischaker, Arent Fox

Unique among national public legal organizations, the Lawyers' Committee has a two-fold mission: not only to work toward equal justice for all, but to do so while marshaling the resources of the private bar. Since its inception in 1963, the Lawyers' Committee has utilized thousands of volunteer lawyers on pro bono civil rights matters and continues to do so today.

Volunteer law firms and in-house legal departments provide legal services in the form of impact litigation, public policy advocacy, transactional assistance, legal research, amicus briefs, and through large scale projects such as Election Protection. Project and program matters are placed with national law firms in major cities across the United States. The Lawyers' Committee utilizes a co-counsel model, working closely with the volunteer lawyers, who are given opportunities to work on cutting edge, complex matters.



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ELECTION PROTECTION

Every year, pro bono law firms and corporate legal departments donate to our clients, on average, over 30,000 hours of legal assistance, valued at over \$12 to \$15 million. Large scale pro bono opportunities, such as the Lawyers' Committee's national Election Protection program, garners additional pro bono services, with a record breaking 77,000+ hours (valued at over \$31 million) of legal time donated to our non-partisan voter protection program during the 2008 Presidential election.

“We’ve come some distance and have made great progress, but Dr. King’s dream has not been realized in full. New restraints on the right to vote do not merely slow us down. They turn us backward, setting us in the wrong direction on a course where we have already traveled too far and sacrificed too much.”

*Representative John Lewis, (D-GA),
Grand Marshal, Lawyers' Committee 50th Anniversary Campaign*

The Public Policy Department is responsible for acting as a liaison between the Lawyers' Committee, Congress, the Administration, and state/local legislatures. The Department promotes the Lawyers' Committee's legislative agenda and coordinates the policy work of the Lawyers' Committee Projects.

The Department coordinates the organizational policy agenda through the development, analysis, and support of all projects. It also provides policy leadership, advocacy, visibility, and materials for Congress and in coalitions. The staff coordinates organizational relationships with the Administration, as well as coalition allies; effectively engages with Board Members on the organization's policy agenda; and provides public education through Congressional briefings, participation in conferences, media, and social networking.

The Department is also heavily engaged on issues that span the Lawyers' Committee's Projects and beyond.

In the states, the Department implements the Lawyers' Committee's Judicial Diversity Project to ensure that demographics of the bench accurately reflect the populations they serve. Other areas of work include judicial nominations, education, voting rights, housing discrimination, community development, environmental justice, immigrant rights, racial profiling, and certain criminal and economic justice issues. For example, the Department was critically engaged in the fight to eliminate disparities in mandatory minimum sentencing for crack cocaine offenders. Congress, without a reasonable evidentiary basis, enacted harsh mandatory minimums, which imposed excessive prison sentences for low-level crack cocaine offenders that far exceeded penalties for offenses involving powder cocaine traffickers. This created what became known as the 100:1 sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine. The Department worked with coalition allies to bring this disparity and its disparate impact to light, and worked with Congress to pass a new law that lessens this impact to 18:1.

SPOTLIGHT

From 2009-2010, the Public Policy Department worked swiftly to support the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice and immigrant workers they represented. In particular, guest workers from India were being unfairly harassed and threatened with deportation after being trafficked to the U.S. by a private defense contractor. They were hired in Mississippi and Texas as H-2B guest workers for Signal International, an oil rig company, and forced to pay recruiters \$12-20,000 each. The workers were forced to live in isolated labor camps and told they would be fired and deported if they tried to leave or made trouble. The guest workers filed suit with the EEOC and obtained a favorable ruling. Despite this, they were continually harassed and threatened with deportation. The Department immediately stepped in to help coordinate both legislative and Administrative actions resulting in internal investigations by Congress and the introduction of the POWER Act by Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) to address unfair labor practices. Ultimately, Immigration and Customs Enforcement afforded relief to the guest workers by granting special visa requests. Actions are still ongoing and the Lawyers' Committee will continue to support the guest workers in these efforts.



Lawyers' Committee staff and board members and partners outside the White House after the signing of the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act in 2006.

INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC HUMAN RIGHTS

From the time of its Southern Africa Project, the Lawyers' Committee has been actively engaged in international human rights. In recent years, this work has evolved from monitoring and reporting on treaty compliance in the United States to advocating for the implementation of treaty obligations in U.S. domestic policy. Furthermore, the Committee advocates adherence to obligations under treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and to recognize their relevance in the work of the Lawyers' Committee's project areas. In 2010, the Committee actively engaged in the first Universal Periodic Review of the United State before the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. In 2011, the Human Rights Committee submitted a report to the United Nations on the status of racial justice in the United States in honor of the International Year for People of African Descent.

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS INITIATIVE

The Immigrant Rights Initiative (IRI) seeks to increase the Lawyers' Committee's work on behalf of immigrant populations via impact litigation, public education, and policy advocacy. The centerpiece of this initiative is a collaboration with the Employment Discrimination Project to develop the Delmarva Migrant Justice program. The IRI Team also works with staff of the Lawyers' Committee's various Projects on issues of common interest. In addition, the IRI Team also writes amicus briefs, publishes issue briefs, and organizes forums.

YOUNG LAWYERS' INITIATIVE

In conjunction with our 50th anniversary activities the Lawyers' Committee is launching a forum for today's emerging legal leaders who are seeking to bring about change in the fight for civil rights. The forum offers progressive young lawyers a platform to share ideas, network with seasoned professionals, nominate their peers for awards and recognition, and discuss the issues of the day.

JUDICIAL DIVERSITY INTITATIVE

The Lawyers' Committee has begun to implement a program to provide formal training and mentoring for aspiring judges of color. The goal of the program is to build the capacity and to increase the number of prospective minority judges by facilitating mentor relationships with current minority judges, leading to a long term increase in judicial diversity. The Lawyers' Committee's Judicial Diversity Program is currently being piloted in Washington with plans to expand to North Carolina and other states in the future.



NBA Judicial Council's 2011 Mid-Winter Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico.



LOCAL COMMITTEES

Independently funded and governed Lawyers' Committees operate in Boston; Chicago; Denver; the District of Columbia; Jackson; Los Angeles; Philadelphia; and San Francisco. These local Committees provide a unique range of resources and representation that help to advance the cause of equal justice under law.

The local Lawyers' Committees address many of the same issues as the national Lawyers' Committee: voting rights; employment discrimination; fair housing; community development; environmental health and justice; and educational opportunity. Each local Committee also has taken on other issues that reflect community needs and the priorities set by its board and staff. Local Lawyers' Committees advocate for children in poverty, provide pro

bono legal services to low-income people, represent applicants for asylum and refugee rights, protect the rights of people with disabilities, and provide public policy advice to state legislators on issues affecting minorities and low-income people - among other subject areas.

The staffs of the national Lawyers' Committee and the eight local Lawyers' Committees share information about achievements, ongoing work, and future priorities. They collaborate on specific litigation that spans geographic boundaries, and work together on national and state public policy issues. The national and local Committees comprise the largest network of private lawyers in America dedicated to advancing civil rights.



LOCAL LAWYERS' COMMITTEE OFFICES:

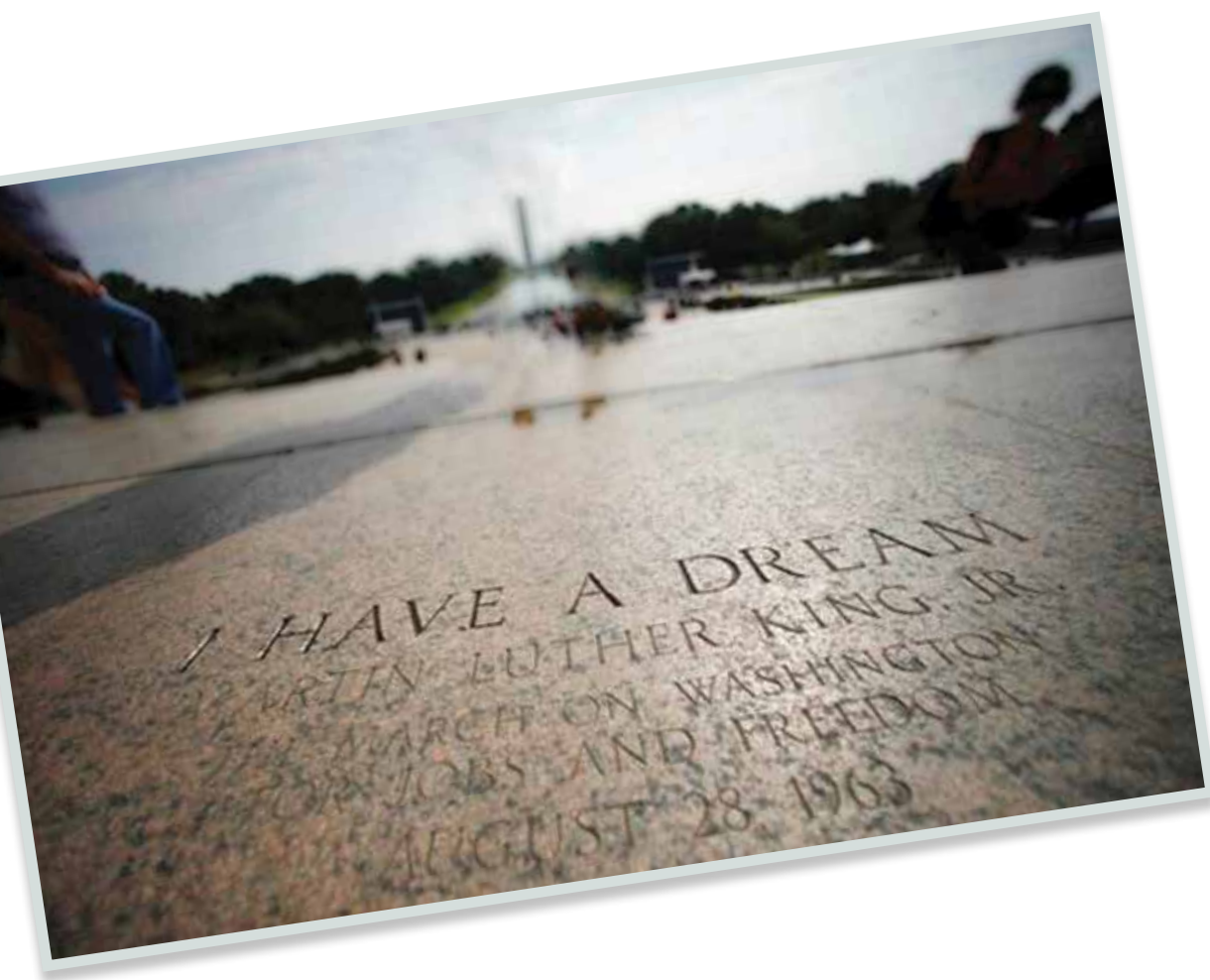
- » **Boston, MA:** Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law of the Boston Bar Association, Inc.
- » **Philadelphia, PA:** Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia
- » **San Francisco, CA:** Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area
- » **Washington, DC:** Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs
- » **Chicago, IL:** The Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Inc.
- » **Los Angeles, CA:** Public Counsel Law Center
- » **Denver, CO:** Colorado Lawyers Committee
- » **Jackson, MS:** Mississippi Center for Justice



ANSWERING THE CALL FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY


With nearly five decades of service, the Lawyers' Committee continues to fight for equal justice under law. While significant civil rights victories have been won, the struggle for racial justice and equality continues.

Together, with our dedicated board, outstanding pro bono services of private law firms, and other partners, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law will remain at the forefront of the movement for racial justice and economic opportunity in community development, education, employment, housing, public policy, voting, and more!



“I would like to think that there will be a day when there is not a need for the Lawyers’ Committee. Unfortunately, that day has not yet arrived.”

Marjorie P. Lindblom, Kirkland & Ellis LLP



“It is essential that young lawyers pick up the torch and lead in the fight for civil rights. We must mobilize collectively and remain strong, determined and resilient through apathy as we push for social, economic and legal change. Change will not happen overnight, but if we continue to fight for equality we will achieve the dream we wish to see.”

*Germaine Austin
Project Attorney, King and Spalding LLP and participant
in the Lawyers' Committee Young Lawyers' Initiative*

Lawyers ^{Truth} *Restore*
Health **Race** ^{United} **Liberty**
^{Together} *Strength* **Power**
Social Justice ^{Future}
Fight **Leadership** ^{Protect}
Recover **Equality** ^{Peace}
Freedom ^{Diversity} *Forward*
Rule of Law ^{Democracy}
Civil Rights *Fairness*
Ethics **Inclusion** ^{Advance}

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